



Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

Official Transcript: Suzanne Chenault (Part 9 of 9)



Role:	Legal Officer and Juris-Linguist
Country of Origin:	United States
Interview Date:	4 November 2008
Location:	Arusha, Tanzania
Interviewers:	Lisa P. Nathan Donald J Horowitz
Videographer:	Max Andrews
Interpreter:	None

Interview Summary

Suzanne Chenault discusses the importance of establishing jurisprudence that will pave the way for future international tribunals, and offers some reflections on the Akayesu case which was the first case to address rape as genocide. Chenault stresses the need for investigators to have deep contextual and linguistic knowledge of the communities they are working with, especially when collecting evidence around sensitive topics such as rape. She stresses the lack of communication among different trial chambers within ICTR as a core challenge.

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Part 9

- 00:00** Donald J Horowitz: Okay. I have two more questions.
- 00:02 Yes.
- 00:03** **DJH: One is what would you like to see come out of this information heritage project? What, what would you like, what would you hope?**
- 00:12 I would hope that we dispelled some of the cynicism that has permeated this, this institution and also has affected the way, the way member states have responded to, to the, to the tribunal. There has been a great deal of poor press in, in Europe and in the United States.
- 00:35 In fact, how many people in the United States even know about this tribunal and know what it's doing? I would hope there'd be a greater awareness and that there'd be an appreciation of the, of the, of the attempted endeavors.
- 00:50 **DJH: 'kay. And lastly, there's no structure to this question, it's – you are now speaking to the future. You could, people could be looking at you two years from now. Five, 25, 50. What would you like, what would you, what would you Suzanne Chenault, like to say to the future? Personal, professional as you wish.**
- 01:23 I would like to see an international system of, of courts existing similar to the federal system in the United States where we have 11 districts. I don't say we need 11 districts. I would think that if we had a tribunal, a permanent tribunal that could be part of the ICC, the International Criminal Court, which has its headquarters in, in The Hague, in different continents throughout the world.
- 01:59 And that our jurisprudence be acknowledged as an international jurisprudence that is known by national jurisdictions, so that we have not only an interaction but an awareness and so that the crimes and the jurisprudence that addresses these crimes will ultimately affect the, the, the activities, the, in, in the world.
- 02:33 We are now finding that terrorism is anything but subdued. To the contrary, most people are quite frightened. We see that when we take an airplane we have so many v-, precautions.
- 02:46 We know that our civil liberties are also being, being challenged. And if the jurispru-, if courts were aware and were, were, were effective enough perhaps that we, we would actually have a hold. We would have, we would, we would influence the violence and the fear of the violence that is now permeating our world.
- 03:18** **DJH: And I want you to know that you've contributed to that dream in your own way. Thank you very much.**
- 03:24 You're most welcome.